WRESTLING THEN & NOW

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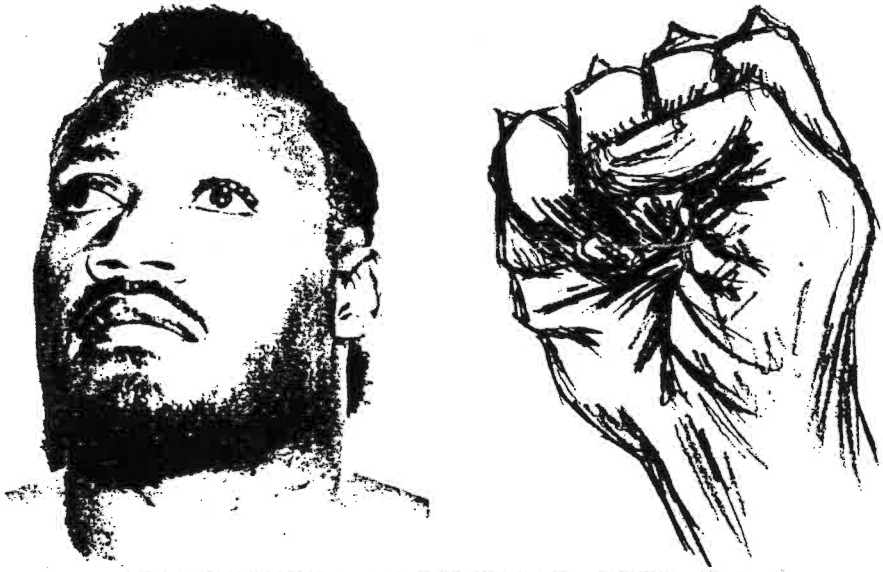
TEXAS BRASS KNUCKS CHAMPION



Interviews with:

RON SIMMONS
PEZ WHATLEY
TEDDY LONG
ABDULLAH
MANDO GUERRERO
GERHARDT KAISER

RACISM IN WRESTLING

THUNDERBOLT PATTERSON

RECENT INTERVIEW WITH THE THUNDERBOLT

SPORTSWRITER – What is your strategy in winning all these matches?

PATTERSON – I cuts em up first. When they is blinded with their own blood I beats them all.

WHEN EVER YOU SEES THE T-BOLT YOU SEES BLOOD.

THE LISTENING POST
BY: EVAN GINZBURG

As a child growing up in Brooklyn, New York, racism was a daily part of my life. It wasn't something you just watched on tv, read about in the papers, or listened to politicians pontificate on. It was very real, very personal, and very painful. To this day, I have horrifying memories of the many beatings, muggings and humiliations I suffered.

You see, I grew up in what is referred to as a "changing neighborhood." For those of you who are not familiar with that term, it generally means that as more and more minorities move into an area, white people "flee" in order to once again "live amongst their own." Inevitably, there is resentment on both ends, racial tensions rise, and real estate predators capitalize on fears and hasten the process. (Unethical real estate companies practice "blockbusting"- they tell a white homeowner that his or her property will be devalued because of the influx of new people, purchase it at a ridiculously low price and subsequently sell it at an inflated figure to the Black homeowner- thus exploiting both parties). Compounding the situation in the late 60's and early 70's was the fact that it was an incredibly turbulent period. Martin Luther King had just been murdered and inner cities burned in rage. Racial confrontations in Boston seeped into the headlines and white teenagers such as myself, who had suddenly became the minority, were frequent targets. I could not fathom a guess as to how many times I was mugged (sometimes at knifepoint), and singled out solely because of my skin color ("Hey white boy, you got a dime?). Leaving your own block meant risking your safety, and you carefully plotted out the safest ways to and from school. It was a frightening and degrading way to live. Ultimately, however ALL of my friends on my block were Black and Hispanic, and there were many times they came to my rescue at great personal risk. I learned firsthand that generalizing about an entire race of people was both ignorant and absurd. If there was a lesson amidst all the pain, it was that racism is nothing more than "fear of the unknown" and scapegoatism at its worst.

I think much of my early interest in wrestling subconsciously related to these difficult experiences. As a young "mark", I loved and rooted for heroes such as Bruno, Jay Strongbow, Gorilla Monsoon, Dean Ho and Tony Garea. I'm sure the heels symbolically represented those bullies who made my life so difficult, and when these men overcame incredible adversity to defeat their larger than life opponents, I felt an incredible rush. It was almost as if I was feeling their pain and rallying back with them. In the wrestling ring, good generally triumphed over evil. The heels SUFFERED for their sins. You got sweet REVENGE on your tormentors.

It didn't work that way on the streets...

Eventually I moved to a middle class suburb with my family. Although a cultural wasteland of well kept lawns, bars, and discos, I walked the streets in relative safety. Like all of you, I also eventually realized that wrestling was a "work", and sometimes even cheered for those villains I once despised. Yet I couldn't understand why the vast amount of black wrestlers were jive-talking, pimp-like, caricatures who inevitably had hard heads and did a little dance to get a chuckle out of the predominantly white audience. As my friends' parents in Brooklyn had been hard-working, middle-class Blacks with "strong family values," (God only wishes our politicians were of such strong moral character!), they were an inspiration to many, as they had fought their way out of ghettos through education and/or sheer perseverance. If Bruno Sammartino and so many other white wrestlers could be role models of integrity and valor, why couldn't' they? Every new Kamala type was a step backwards as far as I could see. Promoters had a forum to reach so many people, and for the most part, they chose racism as their platform.

This special issue of Wrestling- Then & Now means a great deal to me. Each month I try to do something different from the other sheets, and this go round I hope that I can possibly change some attitudes, open some eyes, and AFFECT someone. I sincerely feel that's more important than analyzing the latest Pay Per View results. As I've said so many times, there is very little money in doing this wrestling sheet- yet I am proud of each and every issue. For me that is gratification enough.

As Sam Cooke once sang, "A change is going to come." In terms of racism in wrestling, it couldn't come soon enough.

WWF'S RACIST "VOODOO" ANGLE INSULTS PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT

by Eddie Goldman

Professional wrestling in the U.S. is one of the whitest forms of sports or entertainment. Basketball, baseball, football, popular music, motion pictures, television, and radio are some of the few arenas in American society that significant numbers of Afro-Americans have been allowed to succeed, if even to limited degrees. Yet there are still few Blacks in pro wrestling, with most relegated to playing crude, stereotypical roles, the kind even Hollywood, television, and radio were forced to abandon many decades ago. Likewise, Africans, Arabs, Iranians, and other non-white and non-European peoples are portrayed as barely human savages incapable of even the most basic civilized behavior. Just as racism and white supremacy in general degrade both Black and white, both oppressed and oppressor, so has this shameful state of affairs further degraded pro wrestling in the eyes of both its detractors and many of its supporters..

The WWF of Vince McMahon Jr. is the worst offender regarding these stereotypes. Just look at the WWF-invented character of Papa Shango. Here is a primitive, devilish character, a combination "witch doctor" and "head-hunter", presumably from somewhere in the Caribbean or Africa. He is, of course, a heel, and has cast many "voodoo" spells on the babyfaces, causing them to vomit, ooze slime, and even burst into flames. Whoever came up with this character may have based it on an existing African religion still practiced in Nigeria and other parts of West Africa which worships a god called Shango. The name Shango is also sometimes used to refer to traditional African religions in general. In any case, the name of this god is used. This god is based on a Coptic tradition, coming from ancient Nubia (which is in today's Sudan and Egypt), about a god of thunder and destruction known as King Shango. Likewise, voodoo is an active religion that began in West Africa and is still practiced not only in Haiti and the Caribbean but also in the U.S. The priests of this religion are sometimes referred to as Papa. Hence this heel wrestler is a rogue clergyman, too.

The WWF feels free to stereotype these beliefs, traditions, and cultures, because it holds in contempt the people and culture of Africa and their descendants. Could you imagine what would happen if they had something like a heel Pope condemning faces to burn in hell, or a heel rabbi stoning opponents? They would probably be run off TV. The Brother Love character was not a parody of Protestantism in general, but of crooked televangelists like Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggart. But the outcry over mocking African religion has been less than overwhelming.

The point here is not to defend one or any religion over any other. But the fact remains that, in the WWF, the blond-haired hero Hulk Hogan clutching his cross is good, but the Black man practicing his African religion is evil. This is nothing short of racism and religious bigotry.

EVAN'S RECOMMENDED VIEWING:

I'LL FLY AWAY- FRI. NITES NBC (DRAMA- SET IN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT OF 1950'S)

RECOMMENDED LISTENING:

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RECOMMENDED READING:

MAUS BY: SPIELGELMAN (HARDCOVER- COMICS FORMAT ON HOLOCAUST)

RON LEMIEUX'S ARENA REPORT- $1 PO Box 952547 Lake Mary, FL. 32795-2547

WADE KELLER'S TORCH: $1.25 PO BOX 201844 MINN., MN. 55420

RASSLIN' RACISM BY: MIKE LANO

I am thrilled to have WT&N's editor, and my friend, Evan Ginzburg, join me in my quest to rid all wrestling of racism, xenophobia, homophobia and female-phobia. I cut a Canvas Cavity tv show on racism in the sport April 29th, and minutes after we were done the Rodney King verdict came out. The next day my article on racism from 2 weeks back was printed as a letter in Alex Marvez' great 3-Count. Lightning had struck, and I found my cause. The next Wednesday, we taped Rasslin' Racism II, our second show dealing solely with the above issues. Coincidentally, Evan had just finished a great piece with Whatley who I would've loved to have had on the show. Racial discrimination burns anger in me, just as it does Evan and Ed Goldman. We won't rest until it's cleaned up and I salute Evan for this special issue. I don't think one has to be a bleedin' heart liberal to feel uneasy with the dearth of black performers, and the depiction thereof. At its worst, wrestling's cousin, roller derby, was better represented- with 1/2 female teammates, and a more normal percentage of minority athletes that better represented society as a whole. If wrestling truly is a microcosm of the world, then wrestling better damn well have more minorities in positive roles.

We all know how Blacks and Hispanics have been portrayed (pimp-like personas such as Slick, Reggie Fine, Willie B. Hurt, Hank James, as well as ghetto mamas, uncivilized savages, banditos and the most obvious lucha stereotype- bullfighter). We all know how women have been portrayed as supportive characters, bimbos, t and a idiots. That was why "corporate bitch" Alexandra Yorke was so refreshing- intelligent, dignified and thankfully Dusty never had her spanked on camera as we were dreading. The opportunities are there for Madusa's WCW character- tough, with an opinion and a mind, and able to defend herself-alone. But these are the exceptions, and are more current. Why did we not complain years ago at many of the territories- L.A. for me included- that usually had only one token Black athlete? Mike Lebell in 1968 was finally forced to go beyond having token Pepper Gomez, and he brought in Blackie Gordman (who first partnered Gomez) and Mil Mascaras who made him nothing but money. Since L.A. was becoming more Hispanic; Pepe Lopez, Raul Mata, Ray Mendoza, Goliath, Ruben Juarez, Vic Rivera, Juan Rivas (Vic's brother), Raul Reyes and many more were added. Tolos, Blassie, and Ladd were forced to "work on the other side of the street- left handed" and wrestle their Hispanic brothers, and everyone was the better for it. Los Angeles was the first to depict Japanese as faces as early as 1960 with Rickidozan (vs. Blassie, Moto and Destroyer), 1962- Baba, 1964- Inoki as Little Tokyo, 1969- Baba and Sakaguchi, 1976- Fujinami, 1977- Go, Choshu and others; but still had the stereotypical Oriental salt-throwing villains all circuits had: Shibuya- Saito, Hiro Ota, Kim Song Ho, Pak Choo, Pak Song; and even a masked Greg Valentine as Hiroshima Joe who tossed and hid salt.

The racist angles do in fact affect the box office. The reason why Black fans are barely buying tickets to WWF and WCW Arena matches and PPV's is because more often than not the pushed issues and wrestlers are whites (with the obvious exception of Ron Simmons). This is non-reflective of our culture today where minorities occupy a far healthier share of attention: Jesse Jackson and Tom Bradley in politics; MTV and VH1 loaded with the Jacksons, Hammer, Whitney Houston; tv's role models, the Cosbys who ruled the 80's airwaves; black tv news anchors in every market and 60 Minutes; and voted number one sports role model in the US and Canada- Michael Jordan; not to mention all the popular black films and directors like Spike Lee, John Singleton, and Robert Townsend. Black personalites seemingly dominate entertainment and sports, yet wrestling still can't get with it enough and instead offers a small fraction of their total workers as minorities. It

(EDITOR'S NOTE: THE RON SIMMONS, TEDDY LONG & ABDULLAH INTERVIEWS TOOK PLACE IN EARLY 1992, PRECEDING THE BILL WATTS REIGN AT WCW).

took only minutes for me to list most every black performer ever in wrestling, and the extremely limited number of black champions.

WWWF/WWF Champs- No black champs.
WWWF Tag Champs- Sonny King and Chief Strongbow, Johnson-Atlas
SF US Champ- Rocky Johnson & George Welles. SF World tag team- only Johnson & Pat Patterson.
LA WWA World Champ- Bearcat Wright, Bobo Brazil
America's: Rocky Johnson, Ernie Ladd, Leroy Brown, Porkchop
LA Brass Knux- Duane Allen
America's Tag- Dixon and Maynard, Rivera and Porkchop, the "Jones Boys" (a disgusting monicker for Tom and S.D.)
(Bruiser's) WWA Champ- Sailor Art Thomas
WWA Tag- Sailor in multiple pairings
Detroit US Champ- T'Bolt, Bobo, Abdullah
Detroit World Tag- Bobo and several partners
USWA- Kimala, Koko(?)
WCCW- first and only black champ- Iceman Parsons
Calgary- didn't Larry Cameron have singles or tag title once?
Fla.- Sweet Brown Sugar
Florida Tag- Leroy Brown and Ray Candy in their Muslim stereotypes
National Title- Tony Atlas (also several ICCW reigns- bravo to the Savoldi's here).
National Tag Title- Atlas-Reed/Reed-Welles, Leroy Brown & ?,
Mid South North American- JYD and Butch Reed
Midsouth Tag- Abby and Ladd and JYD/Wrestling 2
Georgia Champs (Gunkle Opposition)- Ladd & Ray Candy
Missouri Title- None?
Central States Champ- Rufus R. Jones
WCW World Tag- Doom with Teddy Long

I also believe Brickhouse Brown has held tag title in World Class and Portland. Dallas American title- Skip Young. The AWA had NOTHING- EVER! It is NOT a lengthy list when you consider the dozens of territories and the fact that we are covering DECADES of wrestling history.

Other name Black wrestlers who are in this relatively small list: Jim Mitchell, Woody Strode, Hank James, Haiti Kid, Little Bobo, Ray Candy, Soultrain Jones, Savannah Jack, Luther Lindsey, Marva Johnson, Juanita Wright, Black Venus, Allen Coage, Kimalas, Sweet Daddy Siki (see extensive interview in WT&N issue #28), Sultan of Sudan, Bobo Jr., Black Moondog, Miss Texas, Mexico and NJPW's Black Scorpio, the late Hurricane Frank Hester, Derrick "Starfire" Dukes, Joe Louis (yes, he wrestled when the IRS took all his money- see WT&N #32 for rare clip), Samba Mulumba, Berto Deuschel, Norman Smiley, Big Red Reece, Dark Journey, Tyree Pride, J.T. Smith, Rasta, Armand Hussein, Bearcat Brown, Sweet Ebony Diamond, Skip young, Mr. Curtis Hughes, Chubby Moe Kool, Ebony Experience, and current Memphis star Big Black Dog.

I spoke to several wrestlers on their views on racism in wrestling:

ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER-

Black athletes were always faces in the late 50's, early 60's. They competed against white champs like Buddy Rogers but when civil rights riots and protests began to boil in the mid 60's, capped with black radicalism at the '68 Olympics, Black wrestlers were pretty much pitted against each other (Ex: Bobo-Ladd). I think Detroit was ahead in that many times 1/4 of the guys on the card were Black.

(The Sheik prided himself on being "of color" and considered himself dark-skinned so I guess we can count the long-running Brazil-Sheik feud as another "black" match that Abby and so many tell me was the norm for this period).

GERHARDT KAISER-

Henry Rodgers Jr. and the Welches used to take guys like Luther Lindsey- who was a phenominal wrestler and Bearcat Brown and humiliate them by throwing white powder all over them in 60's and 70's angles- something that recropped its ugly head just a few years back when Verne did it with Wiskowski and Derrick Dukes. My character was fresh because I didn't have to fake a German accent and never did Nazi interviews- I only talked about the other guys' lack of ability. Many of these promoters in the 70's and 80's relied on lowest common denominator black angles or passe mentality such as this, or that all blacks have hard heads like coconuts (hence the first reference to Bobo's Coco Clop, nee Cocobutt or headbutt), or that they shuffle, talk like Rufus R. Jones, come from the projects or hood etc. Even Ernie Ladd used to give racist interviews- calling other Blacks Uncle Toms or saying they could shine his shoes. That was the way things were back then, but some of these areas had no black people in their communities, and the way the promoter presented the blacks was whatever hang-ups he had in his head- they educated their fans to think this was how the race was to be perceived.

MANDO GUERRERO:

My brothers Chavo and Hector had to dress up like ridiculous frito banditos or not appear at all for Leroy McGuirk. Even though white wrestlers then didn't have to have gimmicks for the most part- the minorities better have one- and this was in the 70's and early 80's before it even turned into a cartoon.

RON SIMMONS (Interviewed before winning WCW belt)-

I want a copy of your Observer letter back in '85- you probably were the first in print to say anything about the racism that has occurred for many years in wrestling. I really think you again drove the points home in that Three Count article. That sounded great. I like what you said about challenging Vince to interview minorities for any booking or top level jobs the way the NFL and Baseball were forced to. The way I see it, Black people have typically been depicted as not the equal of whites. They have been afraid of giving all people a chance, and it's unfair to deny someone a chance at a normal black wrestler role, or a top position. They may perform better than someone else going for the same job. And we do need more minority wrestlers, not just blacks, but Hispanics too. It's really ridiculous that I'm one of the few who doesn't have to have a gimmick. So many black youths look at an all white wrestling show, and ask "where are the black people?" Music, most sports, culture and politics have a healthy mix of black people- where are they on some of these different wrestling shows? Little black kids ask me- "Ron, do you think someday there'll be a Black world champion?", and I say, be patient, things change, a door will open. But until people are given a chance to prove themselves in all groups, and they give all races a chance and give these people something to see, wrestling won't appeal to everyone and they won't get them into the arenas. I get frustrated like all of you, but I will continue to work hard and prove myself worthy. I want to match my skills with anyone- and want to be treated equally. That's all I ask, and that's not too much to ask, is it? Why isn't there one black athlete in the NWA tag tourny? You guys keep reporting it as you see it!

(RON SIMMONS CONTINUED NEXT PAGE!)

In regard to Teddy Long's visits to the projects- that was Teddy's whole idea, and we're proud of it. We get in touch with all colors in the projects- it's not just black people there. We want them to know there's hope out there, it'll take a lot of work to get out. I feel we should be giving back to the community, and I've been doing this for years. I always go back, just around the corner from my house- we're all the same, they're just less fortunate than I. But we want to give them hope, a chance that they can work hard and get out and achieve anything they want. Zenk, the Steiners, Johnny B. Badd saw all the pain and frustration. We're just letting them know there's a better way to do it than fight and loot like after the Rodney King aftermath. I tell them I was pained and hurt too, and there's someone on their side. I'm proud of all the wrestlers- anyone who can come in and give them hope- even Cactus does it with zero publicity. I don't ever do it for any publicity- I do it because I truly want to. I hope you support us. But why are there so few blacks in the sport- they have no idea how to get in and no one goes out and purposely recruits minorities. Keep telling the public- you're going in the right direction with your cause."

TEDDY LONG- Some of the best recent day WCW houses were when Doom with Teddy Long were beating up the Horsemen- this was something black people wanted to see. It's unfortunate because of tensions, but many more black fans were flocking the arenas to see us beat up on the white bad guys. I think Johnny B. Badd was hottest when I was paired with him, and he is one who consistently comes when we got into the hood- the projects. Ron Simmons, Hughes, Cactus, the Steiners, Tom Zenk, JYD, and many others are there for me too.

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NEXT ISSUE IN WT&N: Our Special Third Anniversary Issue!!!

Featuring: The legendary Killer Kowalski in a great INTERVIEW with rare clips.

Evan Ginzburg's Listening Post- On preserving wrestling history and three years of newsletter publishing.

Ron Dobratz on Bill Watt's great ring career.

The wrestler vs. boxer argument (from 1953!)

Also all our great artists and columnists:

Dr. Mike Lano
Australia's Jason Conlan
Wacky Iron Mike Einhorn
David Williamson
Gary Will & Royal Duncan's Title Histories

PLUS:
Vic Stanley's "romance" continues!

And much, much more! THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF WT&N!

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THE WRESTLING THEN & NOW 1992 ANNUAL- The History of the Territories remains available until 1/1/93. Featuring 100 plus rare clips/50 pages, plus a sizzling Dutch Mantell interview where he rips the lid off the Bruiser Brody murder. If you haven't picked it up yet, don't miss out on this collector's item. Only $7. I'll be taking it out of circulation to start work on the 1993 Annual- details upcoming.

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INTERVIEW WITH PEZ WHATLEY

By: Ms. Billie Jessee

April 1992

Q: Let's begin the interview by you telling us where you were born?

A: I was born here in the great state of Tn, in Chattanooga.

Q: Tell us about your amateur wrestling background?

A: I was Tn state champion and Tn Regional champion. I wrestled and played football at the University of Tn. George Weingroff and I was in the same high school and was on the wrestling team together.

Q: Who were you trained by?

A: By Pepe Lopez but most of my training came from Karl von Braumer, the notorious Karl and Kurt von Brqmer Brothers.

Q: Who would you credit as being the strongest influence on you in your career?

A: One was Angelo Poffo. He also taught me about wrestling and life. Also another one was Ronnie Garvin, who we all know is an outstanding wrestler and athlete. He became very close to me and influenced me a great deal.

Q: How long have you been wrestling?

A: 18 years.

Q: How do you feel about the independent promotions compared to the major leagues?

A: Well, I feel they should take care of business better than they do. Some independents don't know what they're doing. This is America and everyone should have equal opportunity to be a star and they should have a chance to be whatever they want to be.

Q: Looking back over your career, what would you say is the one single accomplishment you are most proud of?

A: I guess it would be to have the chance to compete for the heavyweight title and to have the many great wrestlers speak of Pez Whatley with respect.

Q: Wrestling has changed quite a bit over the years. How does wrestling today compare to wrestling when you first began?

A: Well, when I first started, there wasn't a lot of welcomed outsiders, like there is now. The media was not as critical, or critique, as I would say, of our business but the media at that time was very very knowledgeable. Also, the wrestling now is secondary to the high risk maneuvers and taking a lot more chances of getting injured where as when I first started, we did a lot more wrestling. We wrestled...and the fans were more knowledgeable and knew the difference between a top wrist lock and an armbar and a hip lock. Now, some of the wrestlers don't even know the holds.

Q: Have you ever wrestled under another name?

A: Oh, yes. Everybody knows that I wrestled under the name of Shaska Whatley for a period of time which I enjoyed immensely. One of my proudest moments was to walk out there in front of 14 or 15 thousand screaming fans at the Meadowlands and beat Jimmy Valiant 1-2-3. One other time, I wrestled as Willie B. Hert, which I enjoyed alot and the people seemed to like Willie B. and I wish I could have the opportunity to get back into that character.

Q: Have you wrestled tag team as well as single matches?

A: Yes, as tag team, I've teamed up with several different guys throughout my career.

Q: Who were some of your tag team partners?

A: Well, Ray Candy was a big partner of mine and we were the Mid South tag team champions at one time. Ray was a formidable opponent to anybody. Larry Hamilton from Jacksonville, Fl was also a tag team partner of mine. Tiger Conway, Jr, whose father was also a wrestler, is an outstanding friend and was a very very good partner.

Q: What wrestler do you admire the most and why?

A: Probably, Macho Man, Randy Savage. I respect the man that comes home everyday, sees his family and makes it work. Randy has made it to the top, has done real well.

Q: Are you in favor of the State Athletic Commission and do you think they really benefit the wrestlers?

A: I have never seen any Athletic Commission that has been beneficial to the wrestlers. I've seen them have a negative effect on the wrestlers many more times than a positive effect. Sometimes they just do what the promoters want them to do and that is bad. They should be independent of the promoters.

Q: Have you had any serious injuries during your career?

A: Yes, I've had a couple of serious injuries. Probably the most serious being a knee injury that kept me out of competition for about a year.

Q: What are some of the titles you have held?

A: Well, I've held titles from Mid-South, to Mid Atlantic, Southern Hwt champion and the National Hwt champion. I feel like they should give more wrestlers the opportunity at title shots than they do, including myself. But, size isn't isn't everything. Just because a guy is big doesn't mean he can't be beat. My size doesn't deter me from going against any guy of any size but sometimes the big promoters don't see it that way. I've had all kinds of battles against all kinds of wrestlers.

Q: What advise would you give to a young wrestler just beginning in the sport?

A: First, I would evaluate that specific wrestler such as his height, weight, his intelligence, his willpower...everything because everything plays a part in him becoming successful.

Q: What promotions have you worked for?

A: There's not a promotion that is operating now that I haven't worked for.

Q: Tell us something about your educational background?

A: Well, I went to Notre Dame High School here in Chattanooga, Tn., then I went to Southern University in Baton Rouge, La. and played football there for awhile. Then I transferred back up here to Uni. of Tn, where I played football and wrestled.

Q: Do you have a workout schedule?

A: My schedule has to be flexible due to the extensive traveling but what I really like to do is arrive early at the gym, before the crowd starts coming in. I always make sure that I have my complete rest before going to the gym. Rest is a very important part of being able to perform in the ring or the gym.

Q: Do you remember your debut match?

A: I sure do. It was in Louisville, Ky, at a college, and I was involved in a battle royal.

Q: What is your strongest point, as a wrestler?

A: Obviously, in my whole total concept in wrestling, my strongest point is that I CAN wrestle. I've wrestled all my life. When that marquee says WRESTLING...that gives me an advantage. That's how I can beat 300 lb wrestlers...because I can break a leg...I can break an arm...I can make them give up because I know what I'm doing.

Q: Who has been your toughest opponent?

A: There's not too many wrestlers tougher than the Barbarian in the ring. As far as tag team competition, the toughest is the Road Warriors.

Q: Do you feel that wrestling will ever reach the point of having only one world champion?

A: No, not right now. Theres' a possibility of a unification of one belt might happen but I doubt it.

Q: Have you wrestled overseas?

A: Oh yes, I was called Mr. International, for awhile.

Q: What wrestlers did you admire while growing up?

A: I saw the great Sailor Thomas, Bobo Brazil and Lou Thesz and Ernie Ladd.

Q: Did you pattern your style of wrestling after anyone?

A: Actually, I took a combination of the best in each wrestler and produced Pez Whatley.

Q: What has been the greatest moment in your career?

A: Well, to be from Chattanooga, a kid hanging out on 3rd and Greenwood and then a few years later, to walk out in the middle of that ring at Madison Square Garden...that has to be the greatest moment.

Q: In your opinion, what does it take to be a winner?

A: You have to know what you're doing. Then you have to get in shape. Being in shape doesn't mean you have to look like Lex Luger. To be able to talk to the fans and tell them how you feel and understand how they feel.

Q: Are there any holds or moves that you feel should be barred from the sport?

A: No.

Q: Who do you think is the top wrestler today?

A: Well, Hulk Hogan is the largest gate attraction but as far as wrestling ability, I would have to say Ric Flair.

Q: Do you feel more athletes are turning to drugs because of stiffer demands made on them such as performance, traveling and competitions?

A: Of course. All athletics have a lot of pressures on them.

Q: Do you think the promotions should have random steroid/drug testing?

A: Yes and anybody affiliated with the promotions. But I feel that if they are going to test they should test EVERYBODY...even the promoters because they are representing that company just as much as the wrestlers.

Q: What has been your most embarrassing moment?

A: Well, I was in Amarillo, Tx and was in a $10,000 battle royal. I was up the pole and reaching for the $10,000 when one of the wrestlers grabbed my trunks and pulled them all the way down to my ankles. I was grabbing for my trunks with one hand and reaching for the money with the other.

Q: Did you get the $10,000?

A: Yes, I got the $10,000 but with everything HANGING OUT.

Q: Where are you wrestling now?

A: Well, I'm wrestling on the independent circuit up on the eastern seaboard and then I'll be going to Florida and after that I'll be going to the Caribbean so I'm keeping busy.

Q: Aside from wrestling, what are your hobbies and interests?

A: I enjoy buying older houses and refurbish them

Q: Do you have any brother or sisters?

A: I have a big brother who is a park inspector in Phoenix, Az and a sister who is the head of a computer buying company for a power company here in Tn.

Q: Do you have any other relatives who are involved in wrestling?

A: I have a cousin that's going to become an athlete, called Tyrone 'Too Strong' Hold.

Q: What type of music do you enjoy listening to?

A: The music I was raised with, of course, is Rhythm and Blues.

Q: What is your height and weight?

A: I am 5' 10" and 245 lbs.

Q: What is your age?

A: 40 yrs old.

Q: Who is your fav singer?

A: Whitney Houston.

Q: What is your fav food?

A: Turkey

Q: When is your birthday?

A: Jan 10

Q: Are you married?

A: I'm not married but I have children. One boy, Pez, Jr and one girl Litita.

Q: What is your fav finishing move?

A: The flying head-butt.

Q: Who is your fav actor/actress?

A: Magnum

Q: What is your fav tv show?

A: Since I'm a sports buff, I'd have to say ESPN.

Q: What is your fav color?

A: Yellow.

Q: Would you like to add anything else before we close, Pez.

A: Yes, I would. It's about my children. My son and daughter are the most treasured things in my life. I have to tell you that my son is the Tn State Wrestling Champion and we are the first father and son team to ever do that in the state of Tennessee.

Q: That's very impressive, Pez. We thank you for this interview.

PEZ WHATLEY SPEAKS OUT AGAINST RACISM IN WRESTLING AS INTERVIEWED BY: EVAN GINZBURG

I encountered all kinds of promoters. It was hard to deal with them- some were apalling. You'd have 40-45% Black fans in an area and you didn't have Black stars! It's like Mexican fans not having Mexican wrestlers! We don't get good role models, while any number of white wrestlers are role models. With us it's slim and none. I started wrestling 17-18 years ago, and even then there was still a lot of segregated type situations. I would go to a territory and they'd only have one Black guy. Go to Atlanta- Tony Atlas was leaving so they'd bring you in. Stupid. One of the downfalls of Jim Crockett was that he completely ignored his area's Black population- millions of potential dollars if Black people came to matches. I'm not one to force a promoter- he should get the best people regardless of race, but this was bullshit. I worked for Jim Crockett. I was one of his top heels and I didn't go to Washington D.C.? What kind of stupid shit is that? The people there didn't have any interest in seeing Steve Regal! But hey, we live in a place where Pat Buchanan says things about the white people who made the country- shit, they didn't give anybody else the chance! The Chinese built the railroads and they wouldn't give the Chinese a chance in hell either...

The guys are used to doing what they want to do. Hey, man, just because I'm a different color doesn't mean I'm different. But it's hard to break into the closed groups in wrestling. Verne Gagne never used a Black wrestler until the 1980's! We didn't have the leverage. At least the Mexican guys have a place to go. We don't have a Black owner or promoter. The commissions do nothing- no governing body. No investigations into what goes on- there's been real discrimination against some of the guys and they just have nowhere to go.

Bill Watts did real well, because he realized what he had. He appealed to a cross-culture of people who liked wrestling. It's ridiculous that some promoters were stupid enough to close off all this potential income. Why give a damn about what color people are if they're giving you money!? I still think some of these territories would be in business if they hadn't let their hatred override common sense. Don Owens and some of these old-timers, they'd say something anti-Black...definitely held me back from making large amounts of money. Paul Boesch didn't care what color you were, though, and paid well. Other promoters would go out and screw any Black girl and keep it a secret, but you screw a white girl and you lost a job. One of the promoters had a Black mistress! Now there isn't anyone going to stop a girl from screwing whoever she wants, but promoters clearly discriminated. Also, the Black wrestlers were never in cliques, because those in charge were uncomfortable with that. Thunderbolt Patterson wasn't lying-- he just wasn't able to express in depth what he felt...

Back in the ICW Randy Savage, who's a really good friend, needed 4 guys. I was in the territory and Randy didn't line me up for the show. Now this was in the deep south, and I said, "Didn't you think it was a good idea to line up one Black guy?" Just doesn't dawn on them. We have to think about racism every day, because we face it every day...

I still feel I'm very marketable, but besides Hogan and maybe Luger & The Road Warriors, nobody else can call the shots. All the rest of us are dogmeat. Anyway, thanks for giving me the opportunity to speak my mind. Hopefully in some way, I'll be back in a major area and do it all again, and if not I can always say I've been there!

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RIOT PROVOKING ACTION EXPECTED TO ERUPT

CHIEF WAHOO

TORU TANAKA

WAHOO McDANIEL AND TORU TANAKA VOWING TO CRIPPLE THE OTHER TANGLE IN ELECTRIFYING CLASH TONIGHT AT COLISEUM (TX.)

Believe us when we say that we are not attempting to pit one race or nationality against another, but the fact is that both participants in tonight's main-event at Memorial Coliseum hate each other's guts and these make no bones about it. Perhaps one being a Jap and the other an Indian have nothing to do with it, but the thing is that since Wahoo McDaniel first saw Toru Tanaka, it was hate at first sight both ways.

Although their initial contact is merely a month old, the two have met head on and the results have been devastating in their three or four encounters, including a couple of bloody battles in Houston and Austin. Both told this reporter that their plans are to cripple the other. Tanaka first revealed his intentions of 'eliminating' Wahoo from the profession and when the redface heard it he said that if Tanaka feels that way, he, too, would go all-the-way.

And tonight these will climb onto the roped square with just one thing in mind — to slug the other senseless. The task is not as easy as it sounds as both are extremely rugged and the match is a toss-up. The two are excellent wrestlers, each possessing specialties, Wahoo with his tommyhawk chops and Tanaka with his dreadful Karate chop to the Adams apple.

USING RACISM TO SELL TICKETS

MAIN EVENT

CHIEF WAHOO McDANIEL 245 Midland, Texas VS TORU TANAKA 260 Hiroshima, Japan
2 of 3 Falls, 60 minute time limit

SEMI-FINAL

KILLER KOWALSKI 300 Detroit, Mich. VS THE GREAT SCOTT 230 Hamliton, Ont., Canada
2 of 3 Falls, 45 minute time limit

PRELIMINARY

THE GREAT MALENKO 240 Russia VS MR. WRESTLING 246 Parts Unknown
1 Fall, 30 minute time limit

SPECIAL EVENT GIRL'S MATCH

VIVACIOUS MARIA DE LEON VS FORMIDABLE SUSAN GREEN
1 Fall, 15 minute time limit

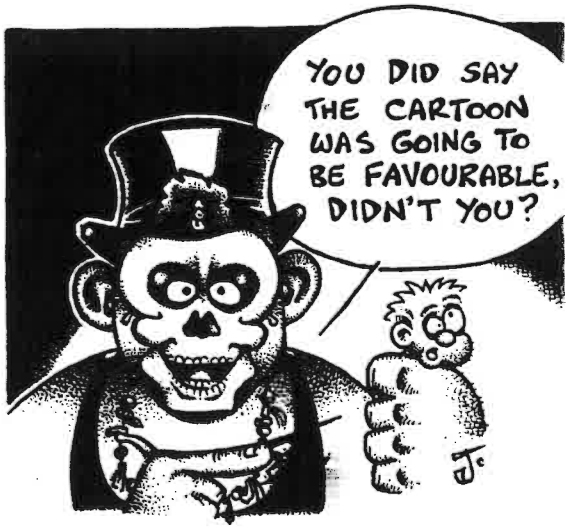
PRELIMINARY

KILLER KARL KOX 260 Omaha, Neb. VS BIG "O" BOB ORTON 260 Kansas City, Kan.
1 Fall, 15 minute time limit

OPENER at 8:30 p.m.

MIKE YORK The Alaskan 260 Point Barrow, Alaska VS LORD CHARLES MONTAGUE 255 London, England
1 Fall, 15 minute time limit

Bulldog Danny Plechas will referee the matches



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